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ROBOT PILOTS REDUCE YOUR SPEED TO 520 KNOTS···
ATTACK UNITS YOUR DEBARK--ATION POINT IS···
NOW!
LOAD A SHELL···
WE WILL ATTACK!
00121
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PROLOGUE
WHEN A MADMAN NAMED RYKOS, DICTATOR OF A SMALL SOUTH AMERICAN NATION, DISCOVERED HE WAS ABOUT TO BE REMOVED, HE PUSHED A SMALL RED BUTTON ACTIVATING TWO ATOMIC MISSILES--
ONE WAS TARGETED FOR NEW YORK···
THE OTHER DETONATED OVER MOSCOW!
THE TWO GREAT POWERS, HAVING LIVED ON THE BRINK OF TOTAL WAR FOR FIFTY YEARS, EACH BELIEVED IT WAS THE OTHER WHO HAD ATTACKED!
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FELT HIMSELF TO HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO··· RETALIATE!
BENEATH THE RUINS OF MOSCOW, THE PARTY CHAIRMAN ISSUED SIMILAR ORDERS···
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DOOMSDAY

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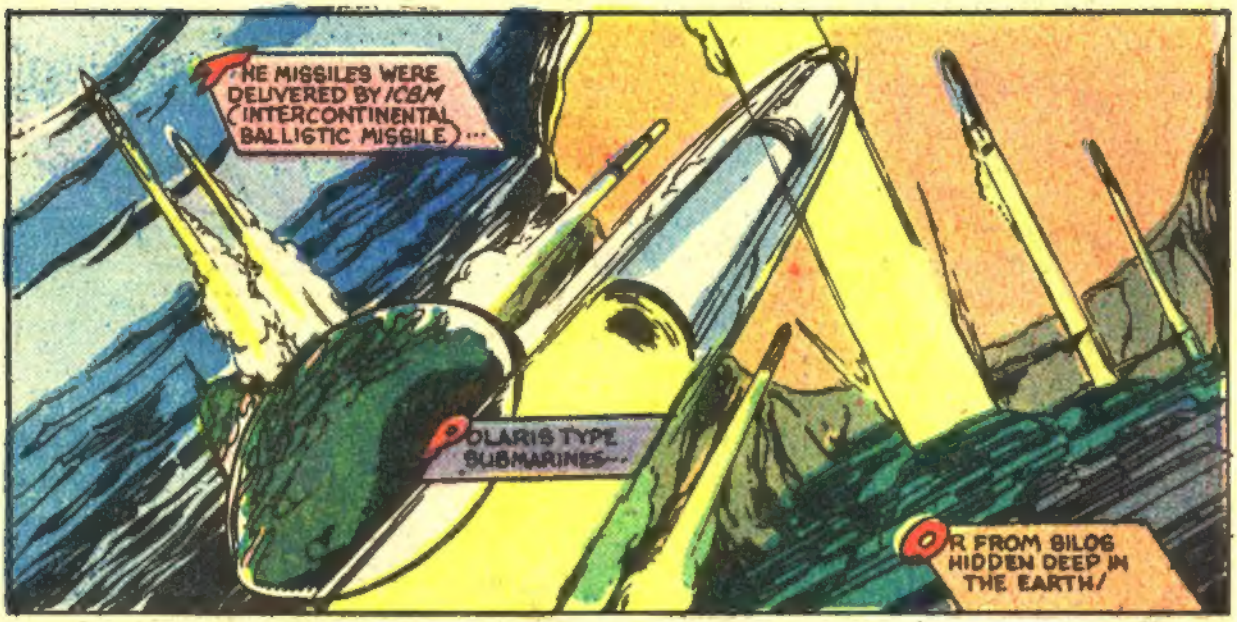
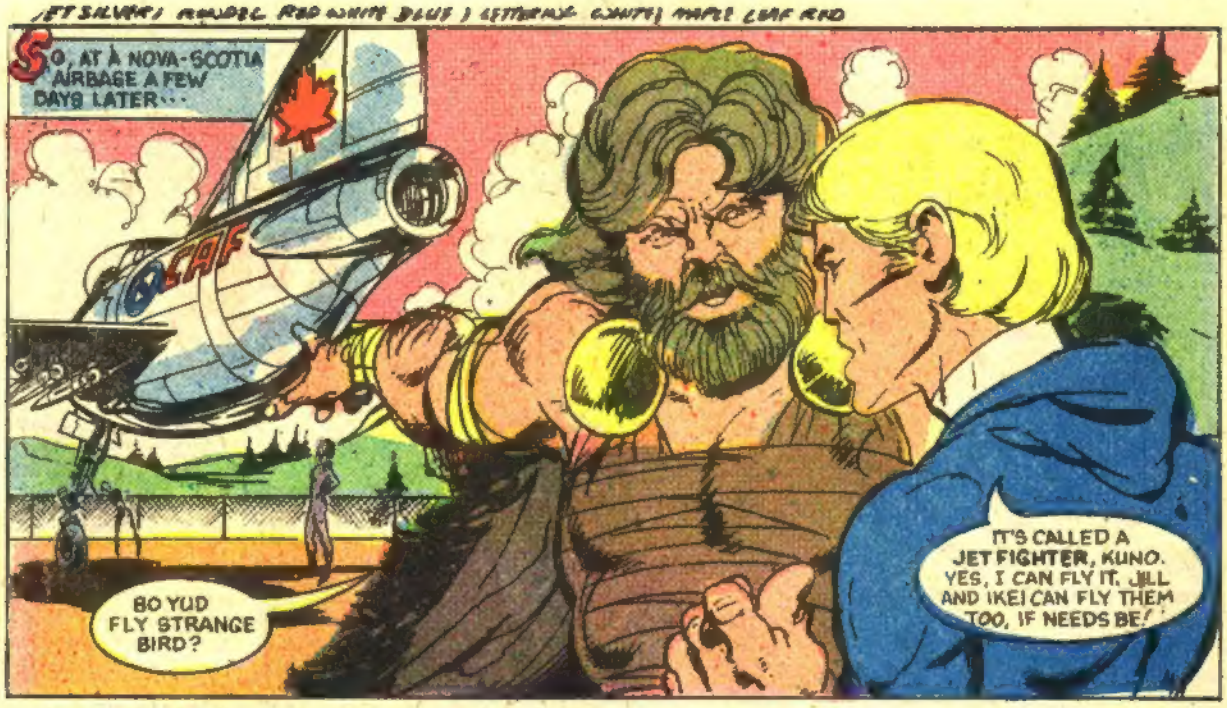

THE MISSILES WERE DELIVERED BY ICBM (INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE)...
POLARIS TYPE SUBMARINES...
OR FROM SILOS HIDDEN DEEP IN THE EARTH!

THERE HAD BEEN NUCLEAR SHELTERS BUILT... BEFORE THE ATOMIC BOMBS BECAME SO POWERFUL THE EARTH'S CRUST ITSELF WAS SHATTERED! AND AFTER THE INCREDIBLY DESTRUCTIVE BLASTS CAME THE EVEN DEADLIER SILENT RAIN OF DEATH FROM THE SKIES... THE FALLOUT OF RADIOACTIVE DUST! PLANTS EITHER DIED OR ABSORBED THE POISON. WATER BECAME DEADLY TO THOSE WHO DRANK IT, AND LIFE SWIFTLY VANISHED!
A FACELESS FOE
WE THREE ARE PROBABLY THE ONLY SURVIVING HUMAN LIFE!
HOWEVER, MOMENTS BEFORE THE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST DESTROYED CIVILIZATION, THREE ASTRONAUTS HAD BEEN HURLED INTO SPACE... IN A MODULE DESIGNED FOR SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION! HERE, IN A TINY ISLAND OF SAFETY THEY SAW THEIR WORLD DIE!
WON'T WE DIE TOO? WE CAN ONLY REMAIN IN ORBIT FOR A LIMITED TIME!
EDITING: GEORGE WILDMAN
STORY: JOE GILL
ART: JOHN BYRNE
2

AS THE NUCLEAR FIRE-STORMS RAGED ACROSS THE WORLD, TEMPERATURES ROSE··· THOUSANDS OF FEET OF ANCIENT POLAR ICE MELTED AWAY! AND, WHEN THE SPACE MODULE FINALLY DESCENDED OVER GREENLAND, A FOURTH SURVIVOR WITNESSED THEIR RETURN···
?
THEY BECAME ALLIES WHEN KUNO, WHO HAD APPARENTLY BEEN FROZEN ALIVE IN THE ICE, SAVED THEM FROM ANOTHER LIVING RELIC—A RAMPAGING WOOLY MAMMOTH!
KUNO DAL!
JILL MALDEN, AN ACCOMPLISHED LINGUIST, TOLD THE OTHERS KUNO WAS A GOTH, PROBABLY BORN IN THE THIRD OR FOURTH CENTURY. SHE BRIDGED THE COMMUN--ICATION GAP BETWEEN THEM AS THE FOUR LEFT GREEN--LAND, CROSSING THE DAVIS STRAIT IN A FISHING BOAT (OWNERLESS IN THIS LIFELESS WORLD). BUT HALFWAY ACROSS SOMETHING INCREDIBLE HAPPENED! THEY WERE ATTACKED—BY A ROBOT-PILOTED AIRCRAFT!

JET SILVER/ ROUGE, RED WHITE BLUE / LETTERING: WHITE/ MAPLE LEAF RED


SO, AT A NOVA-SCOTIA AIRBASE A FEW DAYS LATER···
CAF
BO YUD FLY STRANGE BIRD?
IT'S CALLED A JET FIGHTER, KUNO. YES, I CAN FLY IT. JILL AND IKE! CAN FLY THEM TOO, IF NEEDS BE!

KUNO, YOU CAN LEARN TO FLY, TOO! YOU CAN LEARN EVERY-THING WE KNOW! WE HAVE LOTS OF TIME AHEAD OF US
NO! KUNO NOT FLY! KUNO HUNT! KUNO FISH! KUNO NOT FLY!

JILL, KUNO IS A MAN OF HIS TIME. TO DRAG HIM INTO OUR CENTURY WITH A CRAM COURSE IN PHYSICS WOULD ONLY MAKE HIM MISERABLE!
I AGREE WITH BOYD. LE' HIM LEARN ONLY WHAT HE WANTS TO KNOW!

ANYWAY, WE'VE GOT A MORE PRESSING PROBLEM TO SOLVE···
DID THAT FIGHTER PLANE ATTACK US AS A PROGRAMMED POST-NUCLEAR REFLEX, OR WAS IT DIRECTED BY SOMEONE —OR SOMETHING CAP-ABLE OF THOUGHT?

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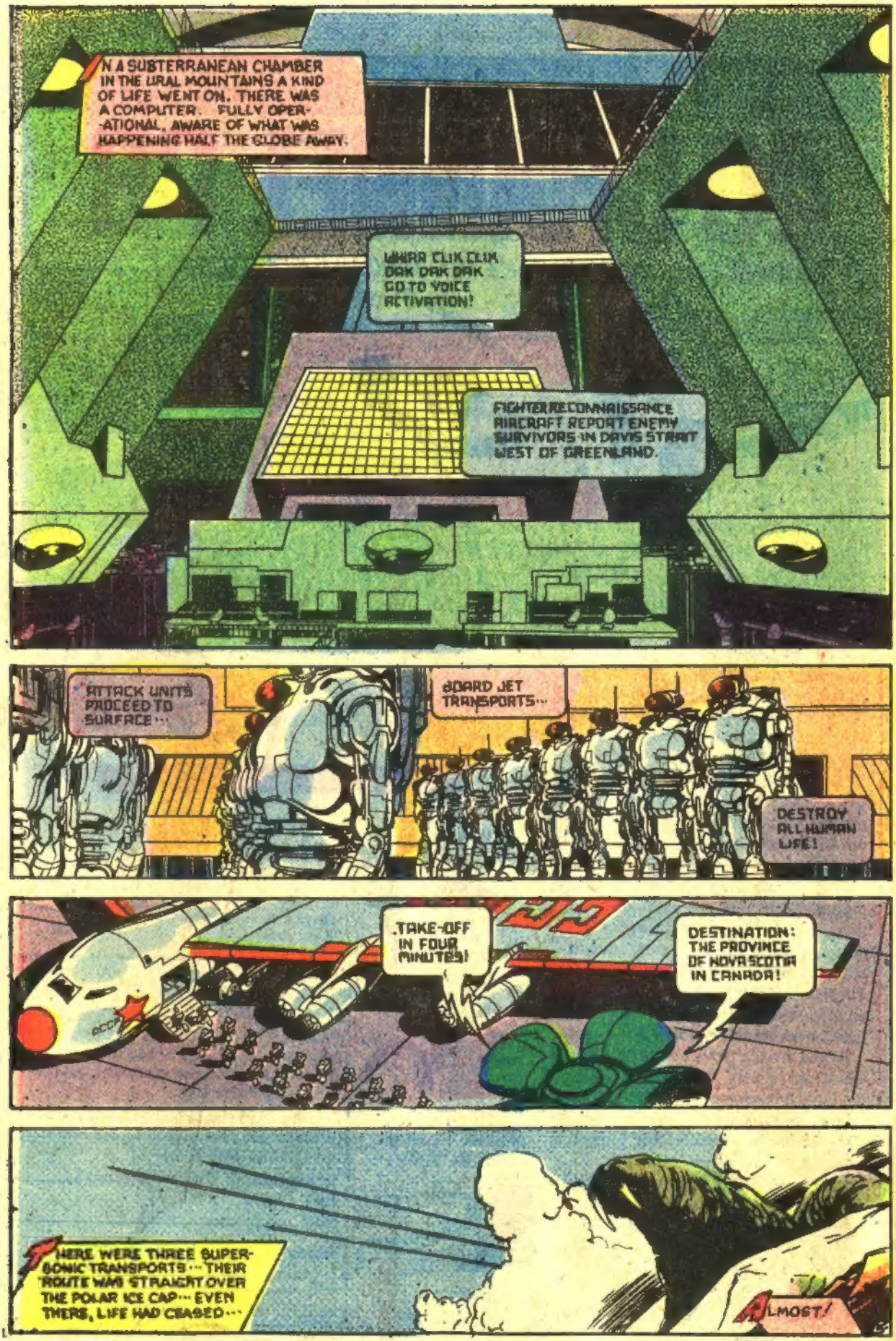
IN A SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER IN THE URAL MOUNTAINS A KIND OF LIFE WENT ON. THERE WAS A COMPUTER. FULLY OPER-ATIONAL, AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING HALF THE GLOBE AWAY.
UHRA CLIK CLIK DAK DAK DAK GO TO VOICE ACTIVATION!
FIGHTER RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT REPORT ENEMY SURVIVORS IN DAVIS STRAIT WEST OF GREENLAND.
ATTACK UNITS PROCEED TO SURFACE...
BOARD JET TRANSPORTS...
DESTROY ALL HUMAN LIFE!
TAKE-OFF IN FOUR MINUTES!
DESTINATION: THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA IN CANADA!
THERE WERE THREE SUPER-SONIC TRANSPORTS... THEIR ROUTE WAS STRAIGHT OVER THE POLAR ICE CAP... EVEN THERE, LIFE HAD CEASED...
ALMOST!

ROBOT PILOTS REDUCE YOUR SPEED TO 520 KNOTS...
ATTACK UNITS YOUR DEBARK-ATION POINT IS...
NOW!

ON THE GROUND, BOYD ELLIS AND IKEI YASHIDA WERE CHECKING THE CANADIAN AIRBASE'S EQUIPMENT - AND BECOMING AWARE THAT THEY WOULD SOON HAVE UNWELCOME GUESTS.
THE RADAR IS OPERATIONAL. THIS SEEMS TO BE LONG RANGE FOR BOYD... LOOK!
THREE BANDITS - ABOUT FORTY MILES DOWN RANGE ... ALTI-TUDE 100,000 FEET!

WE HAVE TO FIND WEAPONS, JILL! THERE ARE AIRCRAFT APPROACH-ING FROM THE NORTH... THEY MAY BE FRIEND-LY, BUT...
THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF GUNS... EVEN HAND-LASERS! I JUST CHECKED THE WEAPONS SECTION!

HERE, IKEI.. HAVE YOU BEEN CHECKED OUT ON LASER WEAPONS?
YES - AND I FEAR WE SHALL NEED THEM... SOME KIND OF PARATROOPS ARE DROPPING FROM THOSE TRANSPORTS... ABOUT 400 I'D ESTIMATE...!

HEAT SENSORS INDICATE FOUR LIVE HUMANS IN THE AREA--
LOAD A SHELL...
WE WILL ATTACK!
THERE ARE VERY PECULIAR BLIPS ON THE RADAR, BOYD! THOSE MOVING OBJECTS APPEAR TO BE TROOPS...
--BUT THE RADAR INDICATES THEY ARE OF METAL!
SKKRRKK
ZZZZZRRK
KUNO KILL!

DESTROY THEM!
THUNG!
THUD
THIS LASER RIFLE SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE!
EMERGENCY! SERVO-CIRCUITS ARE INACTI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI-TI---
AS JILL WOULD SAY, THAT MELTED HIS GEARS!
ZZZZSTT!
BOYD! IKEI SAID THERE ARE 400 OF THEM! THEY'LL OVERRUN THE BASE AND KILL US!
GET KUNO UNDER COVER-- FALL BACK TO THE ARMORY!
I'VE GOT AN IDEA...

IF HALF THE STORIES I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES ARE TRUE, THAT JET SHOULD STILL BE AIR-WORTHY···
···IF IT ISN'T··· I'LL BE A-SITTING DUCK!
THIS'LL BE HAIRY! I'VE NEVER FLOWN THIS TYPE OF JET BEFORE!
BLAM!
THIS BABY IS FAST!
GOT TO TURN BACK THOSE OVERGROWN TINKER-TOYS BEFORE THEY LEAVE A LARGE HOLE WHERE THIS BASE USED TO BE!
THE AIR-TO-GROUND MISSILES WERE NON-NUCLEAR··!
BUT THEY PACKED A TERRIFIC PUNCH!
THE ASTRONAUT-PILOT FIRED THEM TWO AT A TIME, AND···

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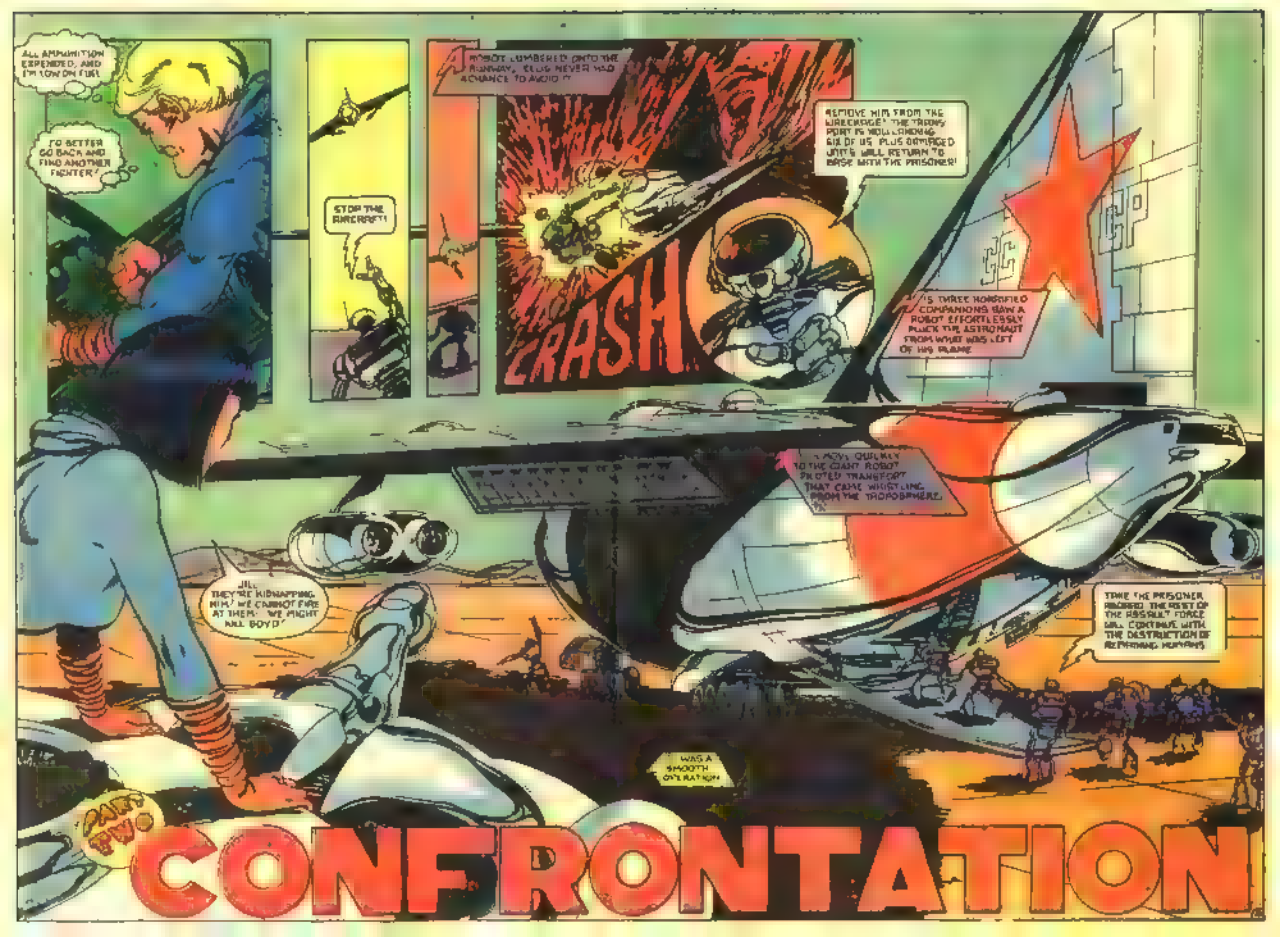
YOU SAVED US, KUNO!
THANK HIM FOR ME, WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, JILL — I THINK HIS BEARD MIGHT TICKLE!
…NOW, THESE MECHANICAL MONSTERS WILL SURELY DESTROY US UNLESS WE SEEK SAFER COVER! COME…
WHERE? WE CAN'T HIDE. THEY…
FLY LIKE BIRD?
YES, WE CAN HIDE… IN THERE!
NO, KUNO. LET'S GET INSIDE …QUICKLY!
KEI YASHIDA STARTED THE ATOMIC ENGINES. THE TANK WHIRLED, QUICK AS A CAT! WITH IKEI DRIVING, JILL CHECKED THE WEAPONRY.
IKEI, THIS ISN'T A CANNON… IT'S A FLAME THROWER!

OW! IF HE HITS US THERE AGAIN, WE'RE DONE FOR!
KRUMP!
HE WON'T
I JUST SAW HIM RELOAD... WATCH WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE FLAMES REACH THE SHELL...
MEANWHILE, BOYD ELLIS WAS STRAFING AND SHELLING THE ROBOT ARMY...
HE HAS DESTROYED MANY ROBOTIC UNITS... BUT I COMPUTE HE HAS LITTLE FUEL AND NO AMMUNITION REMAINING...
HE MUST LAND SOON... AND WHEN HE DOES...
END PART ONE
SEIZE HIM!

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

ALL AMMUNITION EXPENDED, AND I'M LOW ON FUEL!
I'D BETTER GO BACK AND FIND ANOTHER FIGHTER!
STOP THE AIRCRAFT!
A ROBOT LUMBERED ONTO THE RUNWAY. ELLIS NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO AVOID IT...
CRASH
JILL! THEY'RE KIDNAPPING HIM! WE CANNOT FIRE AT THEM... WE MIGHT KILL BOYD!
PART TWO
CONFRO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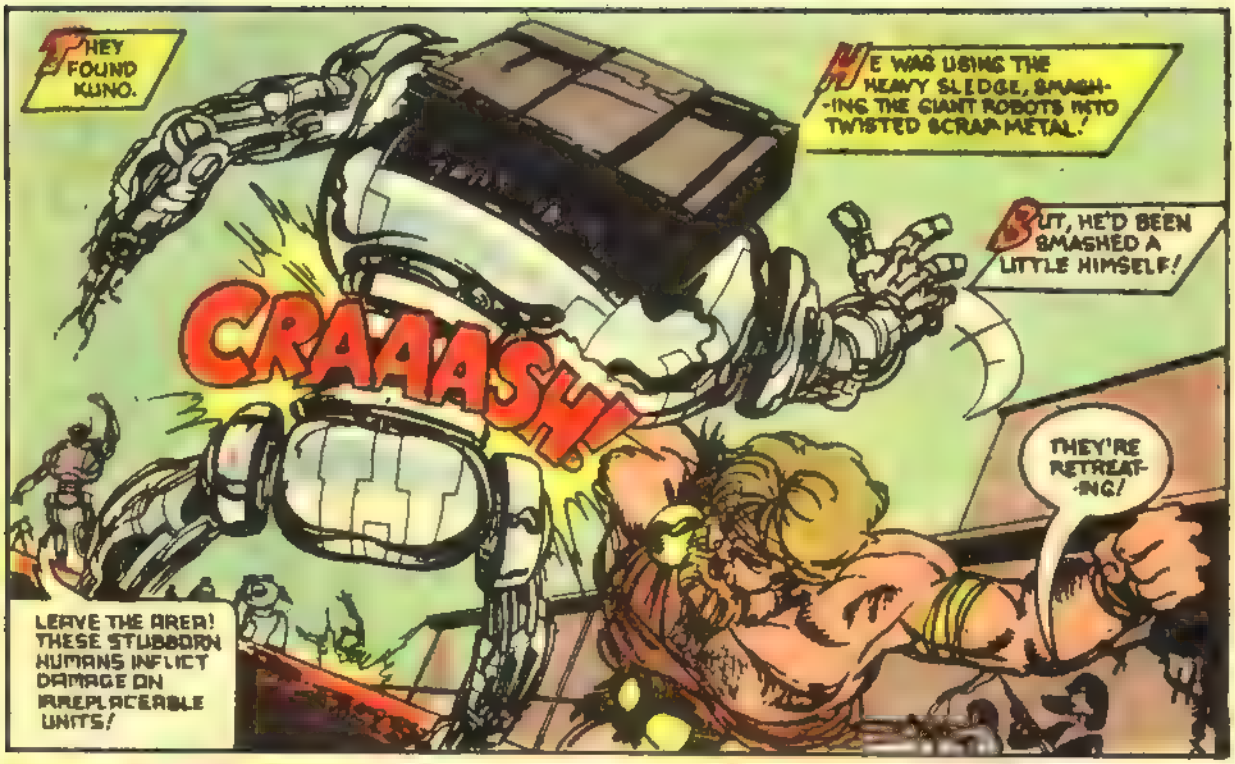
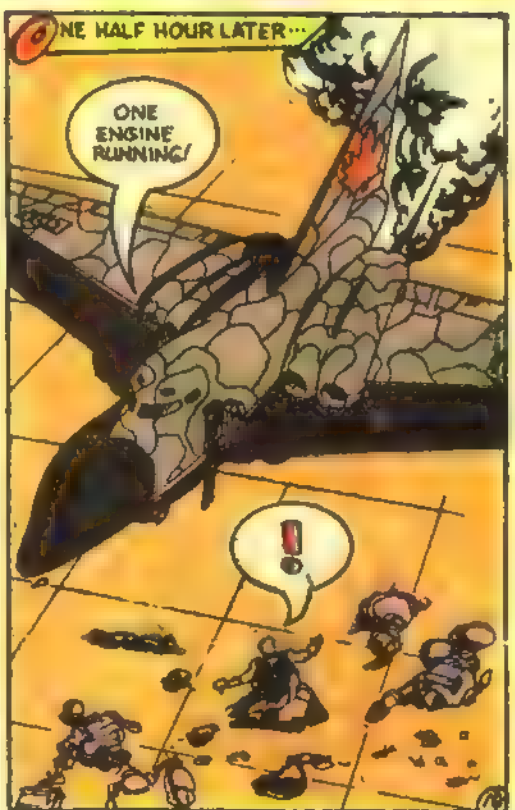
STOP THE AIRCRAFT!
A ROBOT LUMBERED ONTO THE RUNWAY. ELLIS NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO AVOID IT
CRASH
REMOVE HIM FROM THE WRECKAGE! THE TROOPS POINT IS WELL-LANDING SIX OF US PLUS DAMAGED UNITS WILL RETURN TO BASE WITH THE PRISONER!
IS THREE HORRIFIED COMPANIONS WATCH A ROBOT EFFORTLESSLY PLUCK THE ASTRONAUT FROM WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIS PLANE
MOVES QUICKLY TO THE GIANT ROBOT PROTEUS TRANSPORT THAT CAME WHISTLING FROM THE THOROBRIDGE!
JILL THEY'RE KIDNAPPING HIM! WE CANNOT FIRE AT THEM! WE MIGHT KILL BOYD!
TAKE THE PRISONER ABOARD! THE REST OF THE RESCUE FORCE WILL CONTINUE WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF REMAINING MORAYANS
WAS A SMOOTH OPERATION
PART TWO
CONFRONTATION

REMOVE HIM FROM THE WRECKAGE! THE TRANSPORT IS NOW LANDING. SIX OF US, PLUS DAMAGED UNITS WILL RETURN TO BASE WITH THE PRISONER!
CCCP
IS THREE HORRIFIED COMPANIONS SAW A ROBOT EFFORTLESSLY PLUCK THE ASTRONAUT FROM WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIS PLANE.
HEN MOVE QUICKLY TO THE GIANT ROBOT-PILOTED TRANSPORT THAT CAME WHISTLING FROM THE TROPOSPHERE!
TAKE THE PRISONER ABOARD. THE REST OF THE ASSAULT FORCE WILL CONTINUE WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF REMAINING HUMANS!
T WAS A SMOOTH OPERATION.
ONTATION

HE IS GONE!
WE MAY NEVER SEE OUR DEAR FRIEND AGAIN!
COME ON, IKE!/
WE CAN TRACK THE 'PLANE ON RADAR... AT LEAST WE'LL KNOW WHAT COURSE IT FLIES.
IT'S FLYING NORTH. PATCH THE EXACT COURSE INTO THE COMPUTERS. I'LL PROJECT IT ONTO A POLAR MAP!
COMPUTER PROJECTION TRACED A LINE FROM THE CANADIAN BASE, ACROSS THE ARCTIC ICE, TO THE TAYMAR PENINSULA IN NORTHERN RUSSIA.
SEEMS TO ME I READ THERE'S A VERY ADVANCED SCIENCE COMPLEX NEAR DUDINKA, IN THE TAYMAR AREA.
YES, JILL. SUPERSONIC BOMBERS WERE BASED THERE. AND IT WAS A ROCKETRY RESEARCH CENTRE AS WELL.
JIH! IKE! COME!
BLAAM
THAT'S KUNO!
THE ROBOTS MUST HAVE BEGUN THE SECOND WAVE OF THE ASSAULT!


THEY FOUND KUNO.
HE WAS USING THE HEAVY SLEDGE, SMASHING THE GIANT ROBOTS INTO TWISTED SCRAP METAL.
BUT, HE'D BEEN SMASHED A LITTLE HIMSELF!
CRAAASH!
THEY'RE RETREATING!
LEAVE THE AREA! THESE STUBBORN HUMANS INFLICT DAMAGE ON IRREPLACEABLE UNITS!

I HAVE BEEN CHECKED OUT ON MULTI-ENGINED JETS, JILL. LET'S GO OVER THE CHECKLIST.
HERE IT IS. FUEL TANKS FIRST. THEY LOOK HEAVY ENOUGH TO BE FULL...



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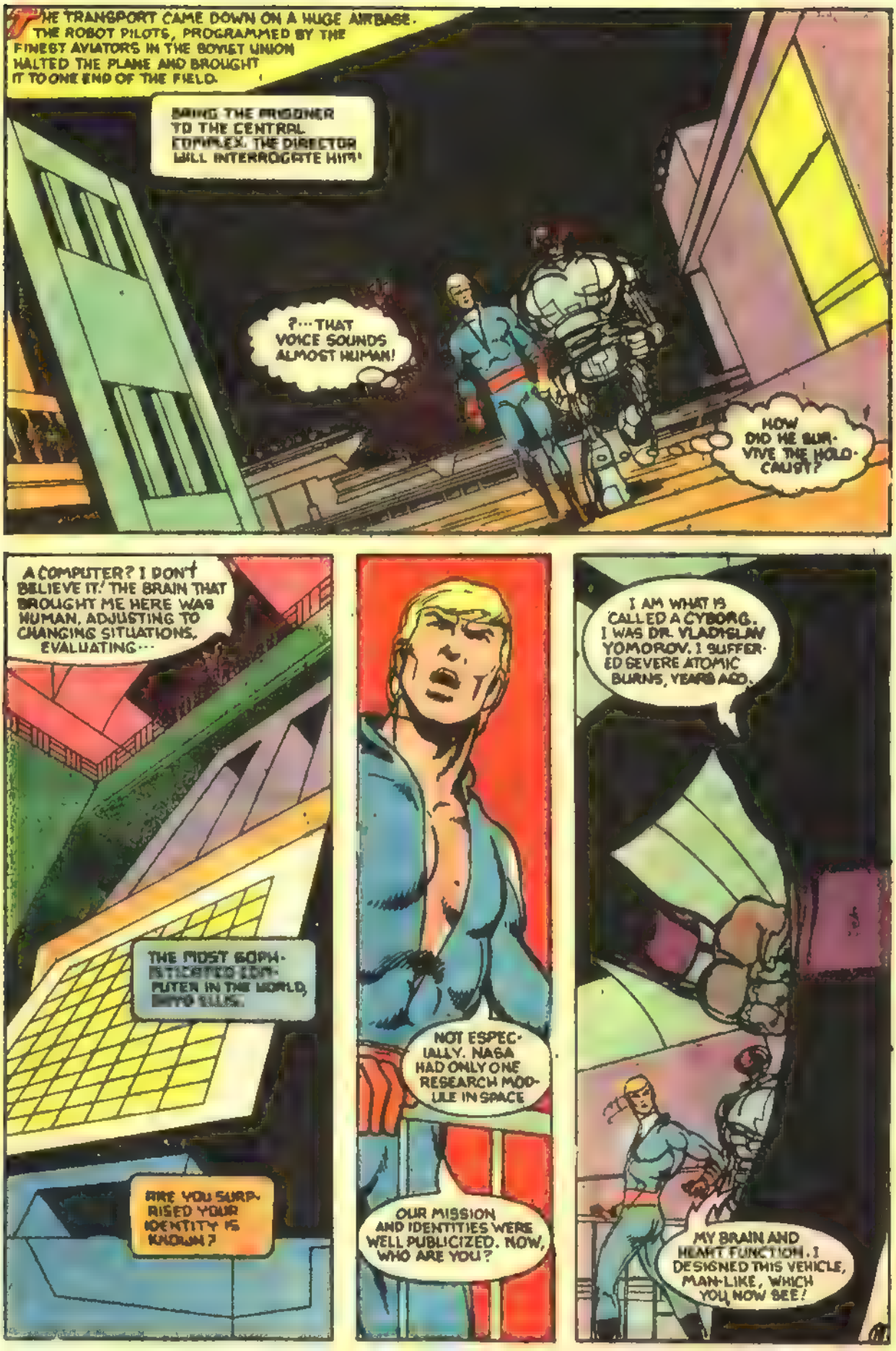
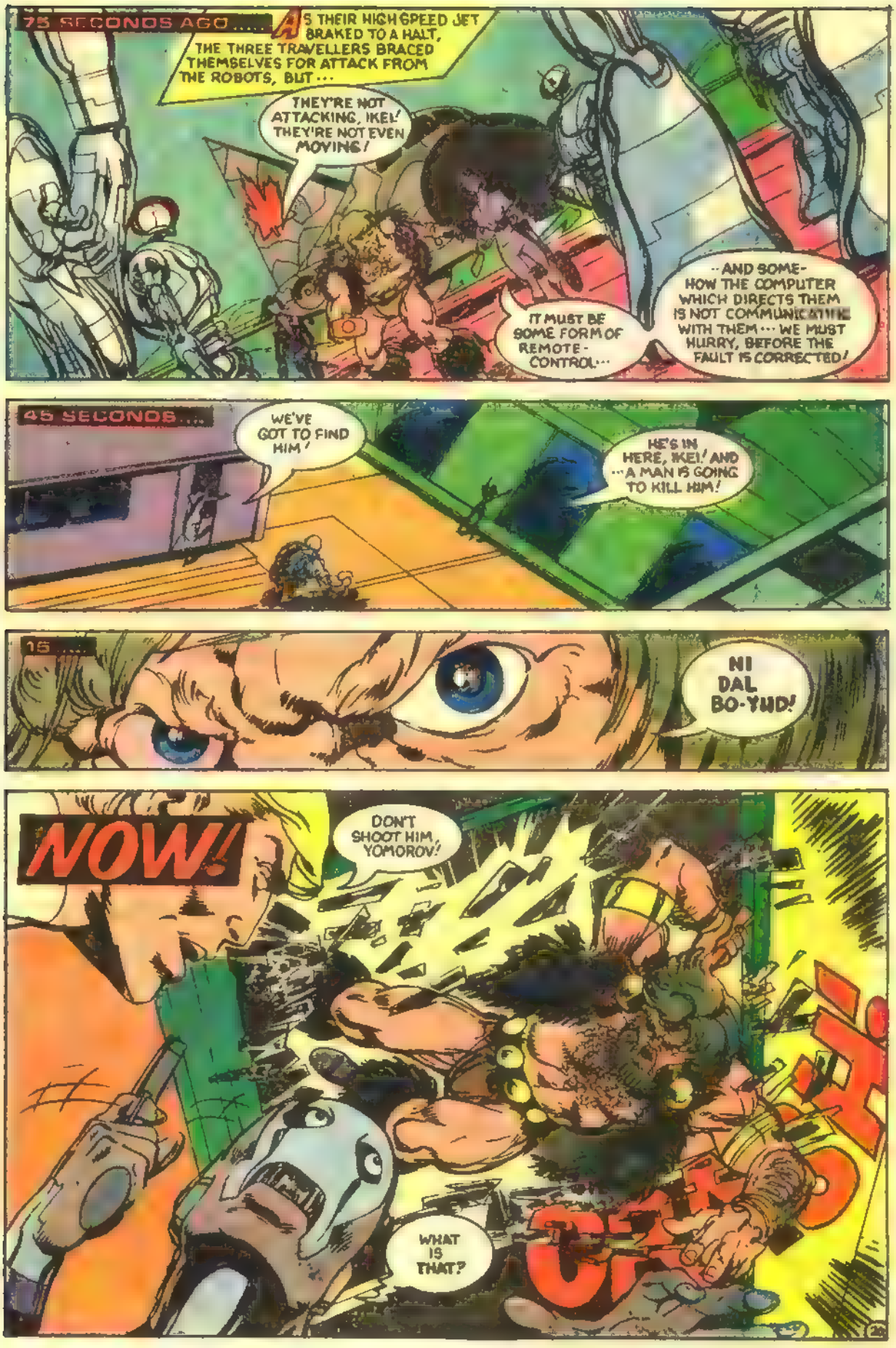
HERE WE GO, JILL!
THE MANUAL SAYS TAKE-OFF REQUIRES A 6,000 FOOT RUN AND WE'LL BECOME AIRBOURNE AT 190 KNOTS.
THAT WAS SMOOTH, IKEL NOW, WE NEED A HEADING OF 348 DEGREES.
VROOOM
I WOULD FLY LOW TO AVOID RADAR DETECTION, BUT WE WOULD RUN OUT OF FUEL. THIS PLANE IS BUILT FOR RECONNAISSANCE - AT 80,000 FEET OR MORE!
KUNO SEEMS TO BE ASSIMILATING THINGS VERY QUICKLY. LOOK AT HIM CALMLY REPAIRING HIS CLOTHES! YOU'D THINK HE'D FLOWN EVERY DAY OF HIS LIFE!
YES. BUT I WONDER WHAT IS HAPPENING TO BOYD RIGHT NOW...?
JILL AND IKEI HAD GUESSED CORRECTLY THE DESTINATION OF THE ROBOT TRANSPORT. ABOARD THE JET BOYD ELLIS WAS HELPLESS, GUARDED BY A GIANT ROBOT.
WHY WERE YOU TRYING TO KILL US? WHO DIRECTED THE ATTACK?
WE WERE ORDERED TO DESTROY SURVIVING KUNTANS.
THE DIRECTOR THEN CHANGED THIS AND ORDERED US TO TAKE YOU PRISONER...


THE TRANSPORT CAME DOWN ON A HUGE AIRBASE. THE ROBOT PILOTS, PROGRAMMED BY THE FINEST AVIATORS IN THE SOVIET UNION HALTED THE PLANE AND BROUGHT IT TO ONE END OF THE FIELD.
BRING THE PRISONER TO THE CENTRAL COMPLEX. THE DIRECTOR WILL INTERROGATE HIM!
?...THAT VOICE SOUNDS ALMOST HUMAN!
HOW DID HE SURVIVE THE HOLOCAUST?
A COMPUTER? I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THE BRAIN THAT BROUGHT ME HERE WAS HUMAN, ADJUSTING TO CHANGING SITUATIONS, EVALUATING...
THE MOST SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER IN THE WORLD, BUT...
ARE YOU SURPRISED YOUR IDENTITY IS KNOWN?
NOT ESPECIALLY. NAGA HAD ONLY ONE RESEARCH MODULE IN SPACE
OUR MISSION AND IDENTITIES WERE WELL PUBLICIZED. NOW, WHO ARE YOU?
I AM WHAT IS CALLED A CYBORG. I WAS DR. VLADISLAV YOMOROV. I SUFFERED SEVERE ATOMIC BURNS, YEARS AGO.
MY BRAIN AND HEART FUNCTION. I DESIGNED THIS VEHICLE, MAN-LIKE, WHICH YOU NOW SEE!

I ANTICIPATED THIS DISASTEROUS WAR, ELLIS! EVEN HOPED FOR IT!
IN A QUARTER CENTURY OF "DETENTE" THE SUPREME SOVIET HAD GROWN SOFT! THE PREMIER WEPT AS HE GAVE THE ORDER TO RETALIATE!
BUT I SAW THE CHANCE I HAD WAITED FOR! I HAVE CREATED AN ARMY OF ROBOTS... COMPUTERIZED, CAPABLE OF INDEPENDENT THOUGHT, BUT COMPLETELY LOYAL TO ME!
WITH THEM I WILL RULE THE WORLD!
A DEAD WORLD, YOMOROV!
RED ALERT! UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT APPROACHING FROM NORTH!
YOUR COMPANIONG! MY AUTOMATED DEFENSE SYSTEMS WILL BLAST THEM FROM THE SKY! IT IS ALL BUILT INTO MY MASTER COMPUTER!
9 DR. YOMOROV REACHED FOR THE CONTROLS THAT WOULD OBLITERATE THE AIRCRAFT, BOYD ACTED!
YOU FOOL! FOR THAT...
DON'T BE AN IDIOT! I'M ALIVE! I'M TOO USEFUL TO DESTROY!
YOUR DEATH IS NOT REQUIRED. I SHALL ANESTHESIZE YOU WITH THIS WEAPON, THEN RESTRUCTURE YOUR THINKING. IN A WORD, I WILL BRAINWASH YOU!


75 SECONDS AGO.....
AS THEIR HIGH SPEED JET BRAKED TO A HALT, THE THREE TRAVELLERS BRACED THEMSELVES FOR ATTACK FROM THE ROBOTS, BUT...
THEY'RE NOT ATTACKING, IKE! THEY'RE NOT EVEN MOVING!
IT MUST BE SOME FORM OF REMOTE-CONTROL...
..AND SOMEHOW THE COMPUTER WHICH DIRECTS THEM IS NOT COMMUNICATING WITH THEM... WE MUST HURRY, BEFORE THE FAULT IS CORRECTED!
45 SECONDS...
WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!
HE'S IN HERE, IKE! AND ...A MAN IS GOING TO KILL HIM!
15....
NI DAL BO-YUD!
NOW!
DON'T SHOOT HIM, YOMOROV!
WHAT IS THAT?
CRASH

THUD!
GOOD, BO-YUD!
TIN-FACE HURT BO-YUD!
BO-YUD FRIEND!
POW
NOW KUNO KILL!
IGNORANT SAVAGE! I AM MORE POWERFUL! YOU CANNOT HURT ME!
KUNO HURT?!
SKRRASHH!

NO! DO NOT DESTROY MY BODY!
KLINO KILL!
NOOOOOOOO!
WAIT, KLINO! DON'T...
--TOO LATE--
CRUSH!
PLAY-TIME'S OVER, BOYS. TIME TO GO HOME!
JILL! HOW DID YOU FIND ME? WHERE ...?
YOU'RE IN A SCIENCE CENTER IN NORTHERN RUSSIA. WE TRACKED YOU HERE BY RADAR.
IKEI'S WARMING UP THE JET WE CAME IN. NOW, COME ON, BEFORE THE ROBOTS GET NASTY AGAIN...
ATTENTION ALL UNITS!
THE ROBOTS ARE ACTIVE AGAIN!

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

THEY'RE MISSING!
THE COMPUTER ISN'T FEEDING THEM ACCURATE DATA!
KUNO MUST HAVE DONE EXTENSIVE DAMAGE WHEN HE THREW YOMOROV INTO IT!
YOU ARE DOOMED, ELLIS!
MY UNITS WILL FIND YOU WHEREVER YOU GO!
DON'T BE INSANE, YOMOROV! YOU'RE LUCKY TO EVEN BE ALIVE! NOW LISTEN...
IF YOU TAKE ANY FURTHER ACTION AGAINST US WE'LL COME BACK AND NUKE* THIS LITTLE PLAYGROUND OF YOURS, UNDER STAND?
SURE, YOU'LL GET US, TOO, BUT YOU'LL BE DEAD, YOMOROV! DEAD! THINK ABOUT IT!
*NUKE - MILITARY SLANG FOR AN ATTACK WITH ATOMIC WEAPONS!
BACK AT THE BASE IN NOVA SCOTIA, THE FOUR SLEPT, ATE, AND DISCUSSED THE FUTURE...
WELL, IT SEEMS THE ONLY OTHER SURVIVOR ISN'T EVEN TRULY HUMAN! WHAT WILL HAPPEN, BOYD?
I KNOW IT SOUNDS CORNY, JILL, BUT WE SEEM TO BE THE LAST HOPE OF THE HUMAN RACE! REMEMBER, WE WERE PLANNING TO GET MARRIED, BEFORE...
CONDITIONS HAVE...CHANGED, BOYD. MAYBE WE OUGHT TO WAIT...
...TO BE SURE...
WHY DID JILL HESITATE? SHE HAD BEEN IN LOVE WITH BOYD ELLIS, ONCE.
KEI WONDERED, AS JILL LOOKED AT KUNO, IF HER FRIEND WAS ATTRACTED TO THE OTHER MAN IN THEIR LIVES.
SHE KNEW THE FUTURE HELD THE ANSWERS...
IF THEY HAD ONE...
AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY of FLIGHT
R. R. JOHNSTON
END

THE LAST RED RAGE

The veins on The Premier's neck were swollen with rage. His eyes bulged as he held the red telephone to his ear and listened. His country didn't have the armament or muscle to enable him to do anything but listen when the leader of his huge neighbor to the East talked

"Yes, Chairman, I understand," The Premier said, trying to control the tremor in his voice. "I withdraw my remarks. I shall make a suitable apology on television some time later this ... *Sir?*"

"Very well. The apology will be worded as you suggest ... as you order within the hour. Yes, yes. I also apologize personally to you, Mr. Chairman."

During this conversation, The Premier sat behind a huge mahogany desk. The Premier had been a ruthless, vicious ruler of an oppressed, impoverished people for a decade. Watching, as he had watched all those years, was The Premier's silent assistant, Dr. Fauche. Dr. Fauche was waiting for an apoplectic rage to bring on a stroke or heart attack.

The Premier was listening again. As he sat there controlling his rage, his fingers crept toward a small console on his desk. The most noticeable thing on that electronic control panel was The Red Button. Before The Premier could use it, he had to employ a special key only he possessed, unlock it, then when the button was depressed the Earth would die!

At last The Premier sighed and said, "Yes, Mr. Chairman, I understand. I will quarter your troops inside my borders. Yes, I apologize again, Mr. Chairman. Good-bye, Sir."

He was trembling with rage as he carefully replaced the red telephone. Then, he looked up at Dr. Fauche, his face convulsed with fury.

"That pig! That animal! How dare he talk to me in those terms?" The Premier screamed shrilly. He leaped to his feet, advancing upon his chief assistant, Dr. Fauche who had been his friend in the struggle for power

"Go on, laugh!" The Premier screamed at the only witness to his humiliating ordeal. He struck him sharply in the face, cutting Dr. Fauche's lip. "You think I'm beaten, don't you?"

He strode back and forth, mouthing curses, looking from time to time at his desk which contained only more bad news. Inflation was strangling the country. Unemployment was starving half the people. Mobs rioted every day in the cities. In this room, one hundred feet underground, he was safe. But for how long? Soon, The Premier knew, treachery among his generals or from his own staff would undermine him and ... He slanted a look at Dr. Fauche.

"You plot against me too, don't you, Fauche?" The Premier suddenly asked. "Why shouldn't you? You are a *nothing*, now. You are a yes man. You will enjoy watching me go down to defeat."

He paused and nodded. "It is inevitable. It is coming soon. The jackals will kill the aging lion if I let them. *But I will not.*"

Dr. Fauche still did not reply. He watched the final madness come into The Premier's eyes as he fumbled in his pocket for the key. The head of state strode to his desk, inserted the key and, watching Fauche's face, turned it. Then, he placed his finger on the button.

"You think I am bluffing again, don't you? When I press this button, the birds will fly. One missile is aimed at every major city in Europe and Asia. They will not know who attacked them, so they will attack each other. You and I shall die ... but so shall they!"

Then, he pressed the button!

In the silence, he gestured at the television monitors. "Activate them."

Dr. Fauche turned dials, flicked switches, and The Premier watched remote television units. Soundlessly explosions destroyed cities.

"Millions are dying, Fauche!" the madman gloated.

Fauche picked up a ringing phone. He replaced it.

"Bombs have destroyed our cities too, sir." he stated calmly.

As he watched, The Premier's eyes filled with tears. The madness was going. And he understood, finally, what he had done.

"Oh, God, Fauche. Why didn't you stop me?" The Premier slumped in his chair. "What have I done?"

Dr. Fauche gestured silently. Two white-clad attendants entered the room and led the quivering madman away.

"You have done nothing, sir. That red button has not been connected in years. I knew it would end like this some day."

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